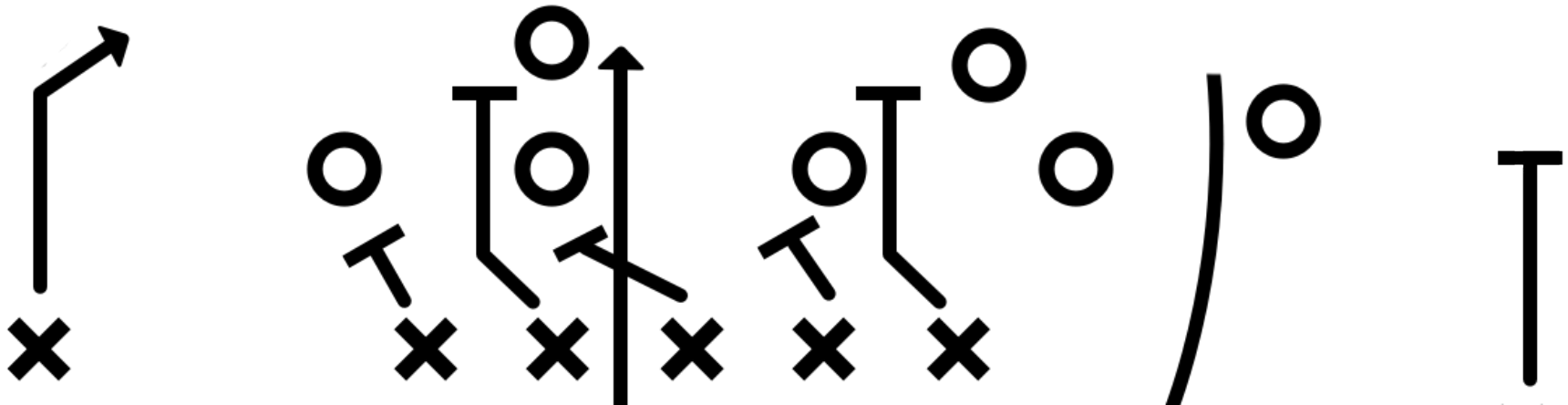


THE PRICE OF ADMISSION

Understanding Scholarship Seating at Gopher Athletics

Michelle Voss



✖ **1980s** - National Football League teams introduce “pre-sell” licenses to help fund new stadiums.



○ **1982** - Gophers begin playing in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

✖ **2000 to 2003** - U of M launches bid to bring football back to campus, begins general funding.



○ **2009** - Gopher Football returns to campus after a \$35 million contribution from TCF Bank. **Per-seat donations are a single price for all STHs.**

○ **2016** - Gophers announce freeze of SS increases based on “a lot of factors”.



✖ **2014** - University announces three-year increases in Scholarship Seating affecting over half of the seats in TCF Bank Stadium.



PERSONAL SEAT LICENSE (PSL)

A fee that guarantees a fan the right to purchase season tickets, sometimes just in the building and other times for a specific seat. Used in some form by teams in almost every league.

SCHOLARSHIP SEATING (SS)

A mandatory donation included in the price of a Minnesota season ticket in football, men's basketball, men's hockey, volleyball and women's basketball.

✗ **1980s** - National Football League teams introduce “pre-sell” licenses to help fund new stadiums.



○ **1982** - Gophers begin playing in the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

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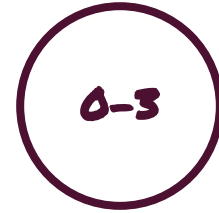
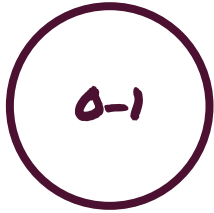


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We jacked up the prices.

Any way you cut it, we told over half the stadium we were going to spend the next three years drastically increasing the price to get in the doors.

We made up a seat fee.

We had done zero communication around scholarship seating prior to 2014. We introduced scholarship seating the same time we hiked prices, linking them in perpetuity.

Crisis times a million.

We broke every promise to uphold the pride of Minnesota with a crisis almost every other semester for three years.

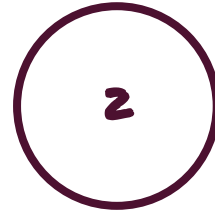
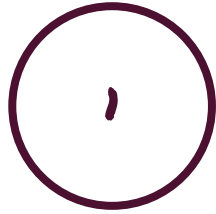
MINNESOTA GOPHERS vs. SCHOLARSHIP SEATING

MURPHY HALL // 5:30PM // BIG TEN NETWORK

Seat fees are a permanent and necessary fixture in revenue for athletic departments. While the idea behind Scholarship Seating is philanthropic in nature, the price increases combined with inconsistent messaging have negatively impacted the perception among Minnesota fans.

THE ONLY DIVISION I
UNIVERSITY IN THE STATE
OF MINNESOTA.

OPPORTUNITIES



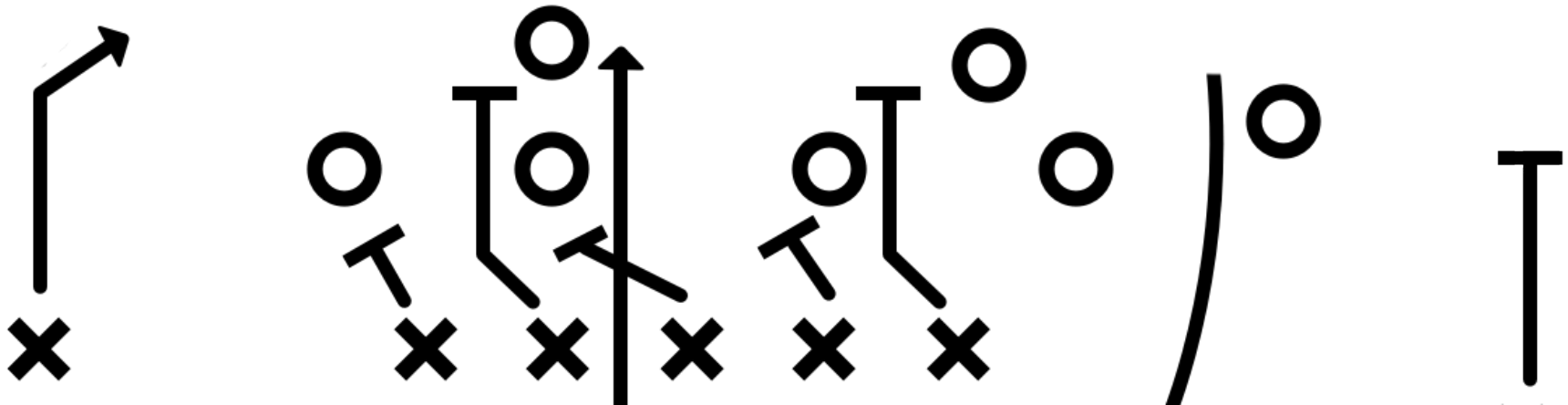
**We have to pay sales tax
on the total ticket amount.**

Before 2018, we were able to only pay sales tax on the price of the ticket, and not scholarship seating. With new state legislation, this is no longer the case.

**Scholarship Seating is no
longer tax deductible.**

But, the decline in tickets cannot be attributed to new tax legislation.
Renewal rates are at 90%.

THE RESEARCH

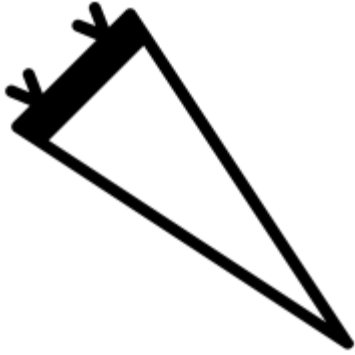


RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. How do external units define scholarship seating?
2. What issues are external units facing when communication Scholarship Seating?
3. How is Scholarship Seating being currently communicated?
4. How do season ticket holders define scholarship seating?
5. What are the perceptions and feelings towards Scholarship Seating from a season ticket holder?

ENTERTAINMENT

External Units of Minnesota Athletics



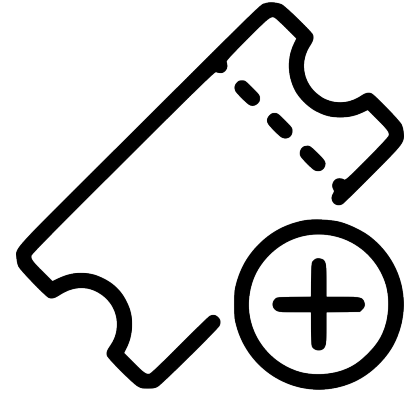
Marketing



Communications



Foundation

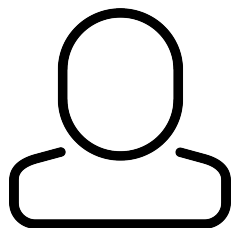


Ticket Office

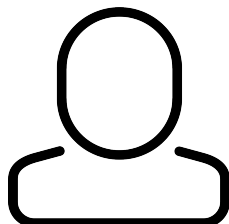
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS INSIGHTS: SUBJECT MATTER

- 1.** Changing the name would only further drag the already-tarnished reputation of the Athletic Department through the mud.
- 2.** The fan base is uneducated on many issues that make Scholarship Seating important.
- 3.** There has to be a balance between making Scholarship Seating transactional & emotional.

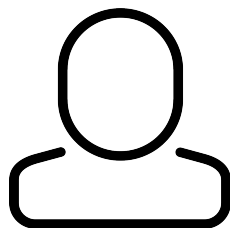
X SEASON TICKET HOLDERS OLD + NEW



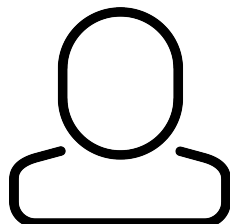
Football, 2001



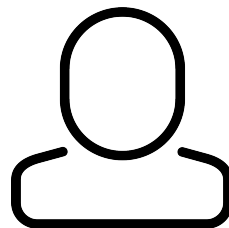
Football, 2016



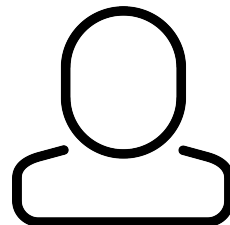
Football, 2019



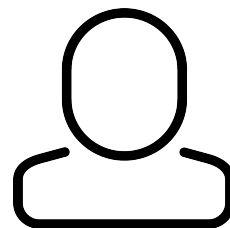
Football, 2009
Men's Hockey, 2002



Football, 2009
Men's Hockey, 2002



Football, 2015
Men's Hockey, 1992
Men's Basketball, 2018

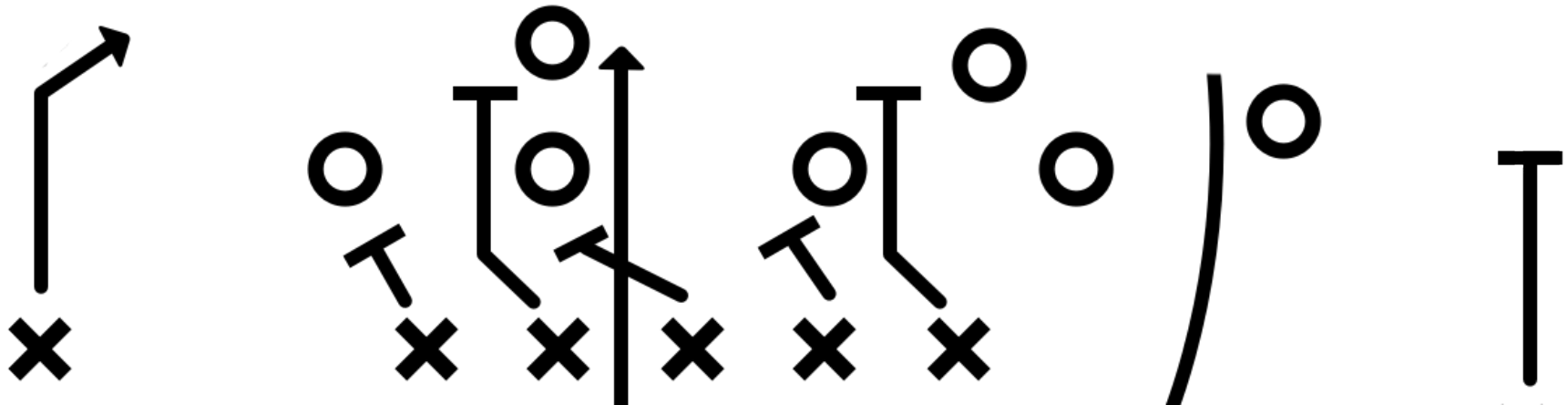


Men's Hockey, 1999

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS INSIGHTS: SEASON TICKETS

- 1.** Ticket holders only see the final price.
 - A.** With a caveat: if we didn't put their "fee" to scholarships, that would be a negative for them.
- 2.** Newer season ticket holders don't have a tainted view of Scholarship seating.
- 3.** They are all able to define Scholarship Seating.

PREGAME WARM UPS



MINNESOTA ATHLETICS TICKET HOLDERS

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graph TD; A[MINNESOTA ATHLETICS TICKET HOLDERS] --> B[SENIOR CLASS  
10+ Year Season Ticket Holders]; A --> C[THE FRESHMEN  
1-5 Year Season Ticket Holders]; A --> D[BANDWAGONERS  
Single game buyers, not yet STHs]; B --> E["I hope I can brag about my dedication soon."]; E --> F[Communicate ways to be proud of the University.]; C --> G["I'm so excited to be back at TCF Bank Stadium."]; G --> H[Showcase their messages of enthusiasm; fan the flames.]; D --> I["I'll wait until things are good and then join in."]; I --> J[Convert casual fandom to low-barrier season tickets.];
```

SENIOR CLASS

10+ Year Season Ticket Holders

"I hope I can brag about my dedication soon."

Communicate ways to be proud of the University.

THE FRESHMEN

1-5 Year Season Ticket Holders

"I'm so excited to be back at TCF Bank Stadium."

Showcase their messages of enthusiasm; fan the flames.

BANDWAGONERS

Single game buyers, not yet STHs

"I'll wait until things are good and then join in."

Convert casual fandom to low-barrier season tickets.

INSIGHTS

Cultural

The other shoe will eventually drop on everything.

Market

With so many options, chosen activities personal decisions.

Brand

We need to be the hero, not the soldier.

Consumer

We want to brag about our state school or alma mater- we just need a reason.

The Sweet Spot

MINNESOTA PRIDE FOR ALL

SENIOR CLASS

10+ Year Season Ticket
Holders

"I hope I can brag
about my dedication
soon."

FRESHMAN CLASS

1-5 Year Season Ticket
Holders

"I'm so excited to be
back at TCF Bank
Stadium."



Ticket holders only see
the final price with a
caveat: if we didn't put
their "fee" to
scholarships, that would
be a negative for them.

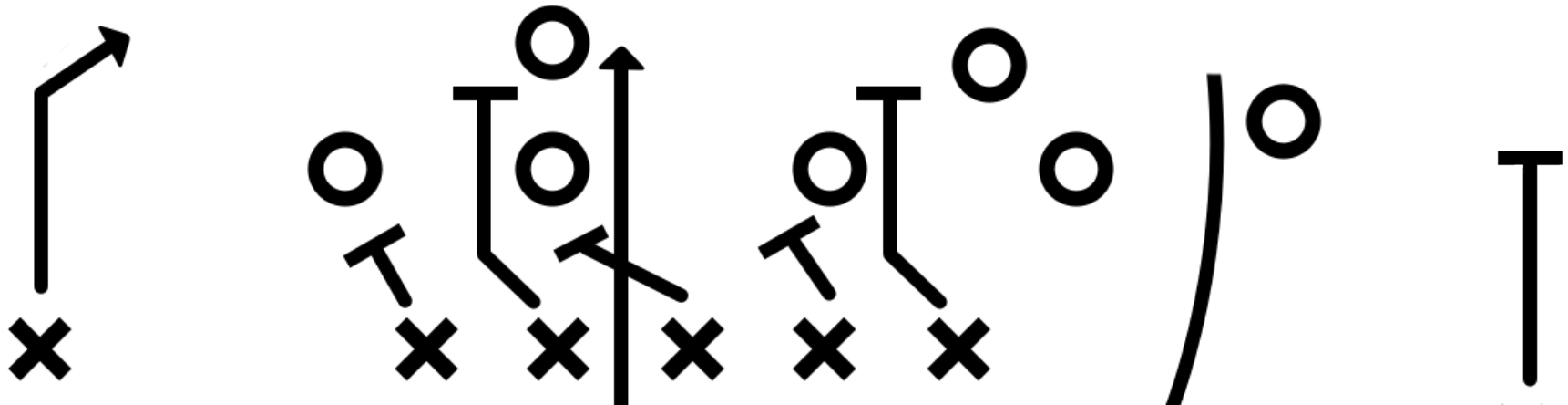


New tax law doesn't
allow ticket
"donations" to be tax
deductible.

State sales tax law
changes require
Gophers to pay taxes
on the whole ticket,
regardless of what is
designated a
donation.

**STOP CALLING IT
SCHOLARSHIP SEATING**

THE GAME PLAN



No More Scholarship Seating

Make the ticket a single price. Elevate the price of the ticket based on the seat location, as is expected for a better view and experience.

Because of the new tax law & sales tax changes, this change in language doesn't effect back end reporting.

No Changes in Tickets

Keep ticket prices the same while educating people on cost structures and distancing from a fee or tax on their ticket.

Brought To You By You

Utilize campaign messaging to reinforce emotional tie between buying tickets and students at the University.

Reinvest in Education

For every ticket purchased, a percent goes towards sending a student through school.

THE GOPHERS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

YOU

Brand Promise

MINNESOTA PRIDE FOR ALL

Brand Idea

BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU

Senior Class

The Freshmen

Bandwagoners

Campaign Messages

You make this possible.

Every ticket bought sends a student through college. Every game-winning goal, every touchdown, every graduation, was because of you.

You made a difference.

Revel in the moment.

Don't just witness the game, live the game.

Relive your glory days on campus with your buddies with great seats anywhere.

Right now is the right time.

Be a part of something bigger than you immediately.

Low-cost season ticket are the perfect plan for you.

Brand Archetype

ARCHETYPE: THE HERO

MARKET DRIVERS

EMOTIONAL BOND



Unlike other Twin Cities sport programs, your ticket goes to sending a student through college. Every time you purchase, you're helping a college student pursue their dreams.

LOYALTY



The “products” in the community have the ability to inspire true excitement, with the atmosphere of a game and the thrill of a victory. Communications could leverage non-purchase actions to increase the level of experience felt by consumers.

ACTIVATION



The ultimate goal of the campaign is to make sure they renew their season tickets or buy new season tickets. One of the main ways our communication will be measured is if we succeed in activating our fan base to take action on their season tickets.



THIS MOMENT
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
JOE FRANK
GOPHER SEASON TICKET HOLDER SINCE '12



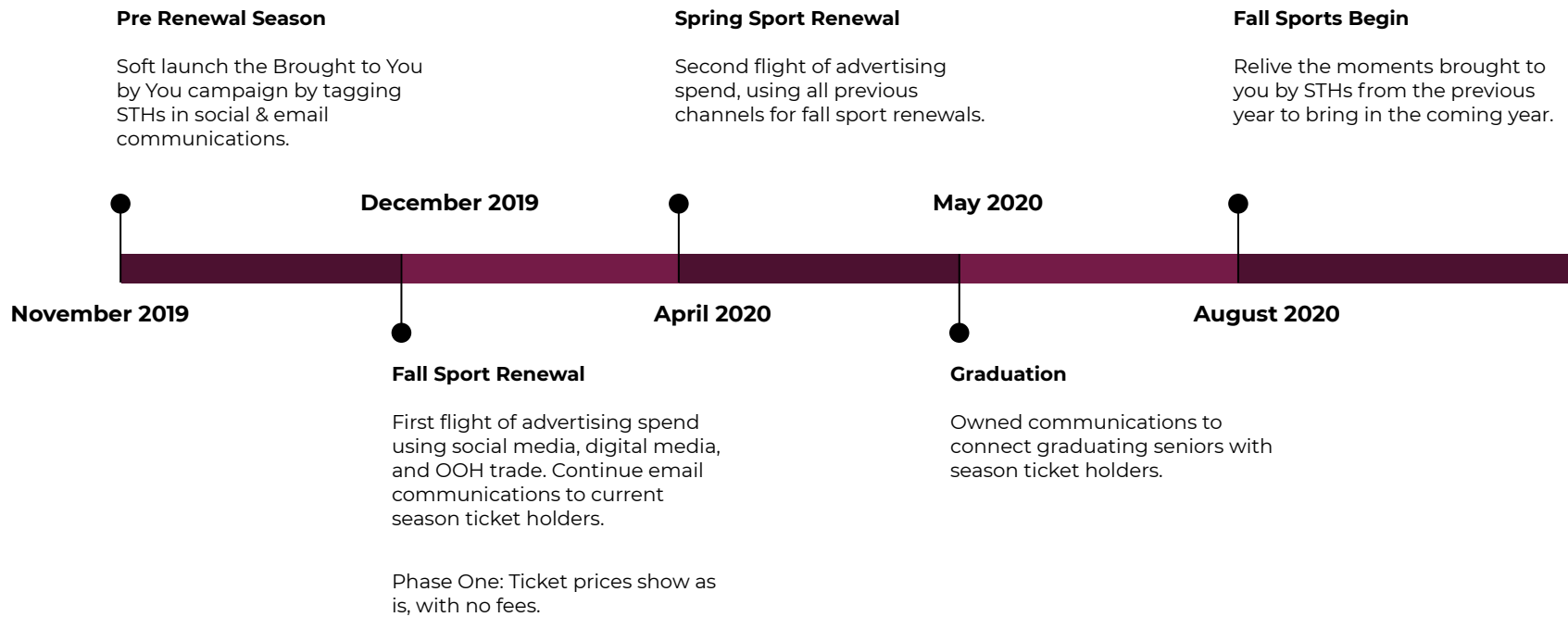
GOPHERSPORTS.COM/SEASON



CLEAR CHANNEL

09:24

LET'S TALK XS + OS: FIRST HALF



LET'S TALK XS + OS: SECOND HALF

Fall Renewals

Measurement of renewals after year-long campaign in place to assess goal achievement.

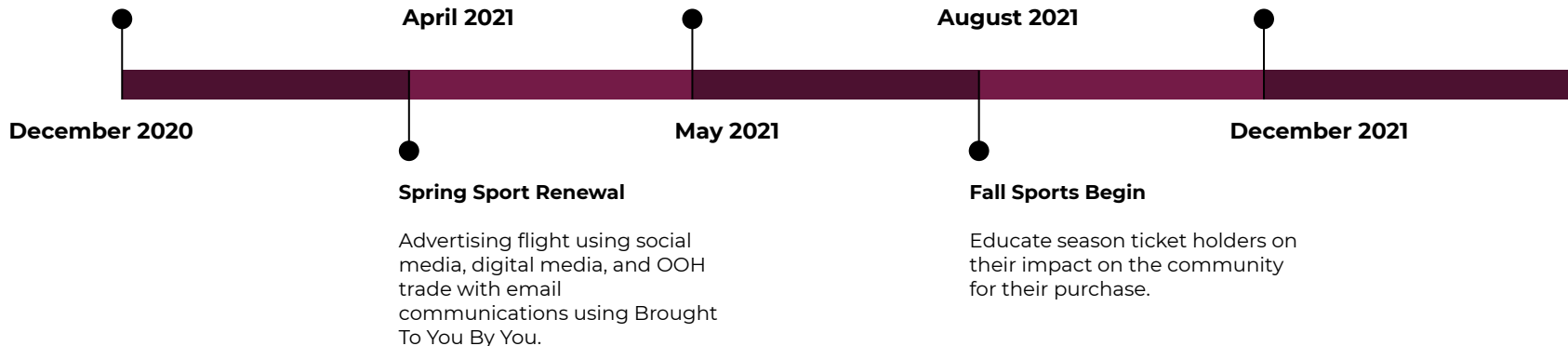
Phase Two: Start adding back education messaging.

Graduation

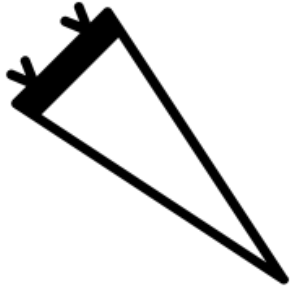
Owned communications to link graduation rates with season ticket holders.

Fall Sport Renewals

Capitalize on fall communication by emphasizing their ticket purchase puts athletes through college.



THE TEAM



Marketing

Email communications.

Budget considerations.



Communications

Social media channels support and social advertising.

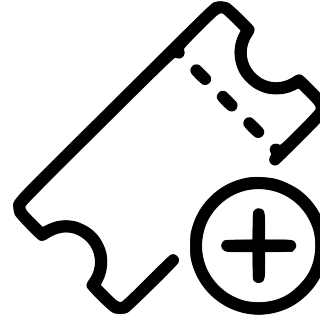
PR efforts with local media.



Foundation

High-end season ticket holder communication.

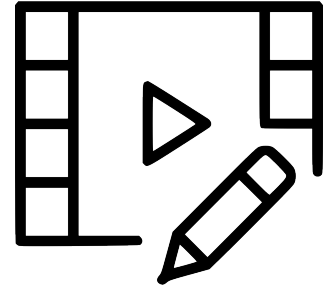
One-on-one training points for staff.



Ticket Office

Purchase process language and changes to reporting.

Talking point and sales training for front-end staff.



Creative

Static collateral for organic & paid advertising.

Video production for commercials and social media.

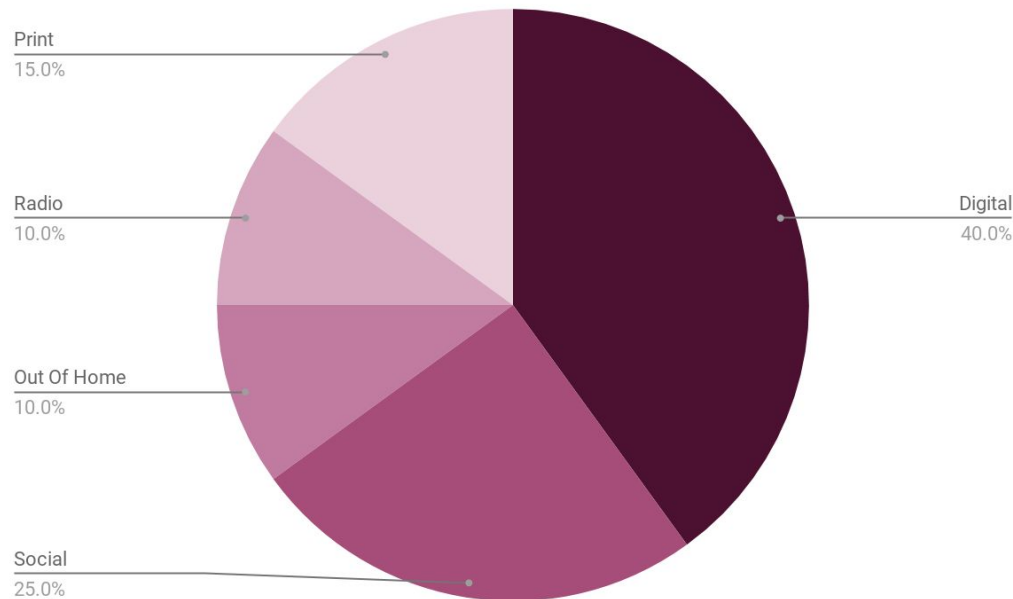
HOW MUCH IS THIS GOING TO COST?

\$15,000

Re-allocate marketing dollars to a specific campaign.

Marketing has a significant budget for marketing tickets. What we use for generic season ticket pushes, we'll re-allocate to the Brought To You By You campaign.

While print and social will play a large role, the Senior Class target still acquires news by traditional media.



...DID WE WIN?

EMOTIONAL BOND



Sentiment Tracking.

Let's survey a sample of season ticket holders at the 2019 renewal period and the 2020 renewal period. Increase in sentiment towards ticket purchasing.

LOYALTY



Net Promoters.

Similar to sentiment, how often do people recommend our product at the beginning and end of the campaign? If there's an increase in brand ambassadors, our loyalty efforts are working.

ACTIVATION



Sales Increases.

Increase in season ticket renewal percentage & new season ticket purchases.

THE FINAL SCORE

Fans want great experiences and to feel good about paying for them. We need to find a way to connect a ticket purchase to giving back to the community.

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOU
LET'S FANS
OWN THE MOMENT**

